

Threat to Tea Garden Executives in Assam

2538. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of tea garden executives in Assam kidnapped and those killed by the militants during the last one year;
- (b) whether extortion notices of Rupees five to fifty lakhs are sent to most of the tea estates in Assam; and
- (c) the action proposed to end the sense of insecurity in the tea gardens who are facing problems from militants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) As per information available, 26 tea garden executives in Assam were kidnapped, and 6 killed by militant outfits during 1999 and upto 31st July, 2000.

(b) Some cases of extortion of money from tea estates in Assam by the militant outfits including ULFA have come to the notice of the Government. However, exact amount of extortion is not known as the management of tea estates are hesitant to share information with the Government.

(c) The "Assam Tea Plantation Security Force (ATPSF) was set up to provide security to vulnerable tea gardens. The tea industry has been advised by the State Government to induct the Assam Tea Plantation Security Force in the tea gardens of Barak Valley. The State Government has been sensitised and action taken against militant outfits, indulging in extortion in tea gardens.

Atal-Farooq Treaty

2539. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Governments attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Atal-farooq treaty in the offing" as appeared in the "Economic Times" dated the 19th July, 2000;
- (b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;